

Modified expansion plan unveiled

Williams keys in on three schools

By CHRISTINE WALSH
The Patriot Ledger

School Superintendent Eileen Williams is proposing three construction projects to keep up with the Duxbury's growing elementary and middle school population.

An early childhood center connected to the Chandler School, an addition to the Alden School and a new auditorium between the Alden and Duxbury Middle School headlined the expansion plan Williams presented at last night's school committee meeting.

Williams' proposal is a combination of four recommendations made earlier in the winter by the New England School Development Council.

"None of it can be cut," she said. "This is what we need to provide the kind of program the community wants."

DUXBURY

Although Williams is not ready to estimate how much her plan would cost, she expects it would be less than the \$33 million to \$39 million the council proposed, she said.

the current 1,900 students to 2,300 by 2009.

Discussion of the school expansion plan last night turned to the RecPlex, an ice arena proposed for five acres of the Chandler School property.

Several audience members questioned the school committee's deci-

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Eileen Williams,
Duxbury school superintendent

Williams based her proposal on the highest projected enrollment at any given time within the next 10 years. The population in Grades 1 through 8 is expected to grow from

sion to support a town meeting article that would allow the committee to negotiate a lease with the Duxbury Recreation Foundation for the RecPlex. They said the school

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committee should follow the Development Council's recommendation to hold onto all school property.

School committee member Betsy Sullivan said the board is simply giving town meeting a chance to vote on that option.

"Never was it our intention that an athletic facility would be more important than what we're trying to do for education," she said.

The school committee decided last night to ask voters to indefinitely postponed an article on the town meeting warrant asking for money to design the projects proposed by Williams. She hopes to get the design money approved at a special town meeting in May or June.

Williams hopes to have the final expansion plan and cost estimates ready by next year's annual town meeting. It would likely require a Proposition 2½ override vote.

The goal is to have the new buildings open by September 2002. "We know it's aggressive," Williams

said. "If we're not able to meet it, it won't be for lack of trying."

The school committee will likely vote on Williams' proposal at its next meeting in March.

Besides the new buildings, Williams' plan calls for renovation and reconfiguration of existing schools. The school committee would return the Wright Building, which houses Duxbury Before and After Dark, a professional development center and two Pilgrim Area Collaborative classes, to the town.

The following is the plan for each building:

- A 28-classroom early childhood center would house the Magic Dragon day care program, preschool and full-time kindergarten students, as well as the extended day program. It would include a cafeteria and be connected to the Chandler School so the two can share space for therapy, special education, conferencing and storage.

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Williams bares expansion proposal

■ BUILDINGS

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- Grades 1 and 2 would use the Chandler School. It would have 26 classrooms and a technology room.

- Expansion at the Alden School would add 24 classroom, two special education resource rooms, a therapy

room, a health clinic, two technology centers and storage space.

- Besides a 1,000-seat auditorium to be shared with the Alden School, the middle school would get a band room, a multi-purpose technology center, two adult classrooms and office space.

- Duxbury High School would

gain three classrooms, thanks to the departure of the Magic Dragon program.

Williams said it is important that all classes in each grade remain in the same building. She wants to limit class size to 20 students in kindergarten, 22 in Grades 1 to 5, and 23 in Grades 6 to 12.